

The BLM's Proposed Fiscal Year 2011 Budget

"We are humbled by
America's bounty.
We are humbled
because the richness
of our lands has
enabled our Nation—
time and again—to
renew itself . . . repower
itself . . . and reinvent
itself for new challenges
and opportunities."

— Interior Secretary
Ken Salazar

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www.blm.gov



**NATIONAL
SYSTEM OF
PUBLIC LANDS**



Protecting Resources and Managing Uses of Public Lands

The Bureau of Land Management, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, administers more land—253 million surface acres—than any other Federal agency. The BLM also manages 700 million acres of subsurface mineral estate across the Nation. In accordance with the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Bureau carries out a multiple-use mission as the steward of these public lands, which are located primarily in 12 Western States, including Alaska.

To fulfill its challenging mission, the BLM, with a workforce of about 11,000 full-time employees, works in cooperation with a host of partners: States, tribes, counties, local communities, government agencies, private organizations, businesses, and individuals. By taking this collaborative approach, the Bureau—which prides itself on being a “can-do” agency—promotes the health and productivity of the public lands while serving the needs of those who use or care about these lands.

The President’s fiscal year (FY) 2011 proposed budget requests \$1.1 billion in appropriations for the BLM, an \$8 million increase over the BLM’s FY 2010 enacted funding level. Under this proposed budget, the BLM will focus on the following priorities:



New Energy Frontier

The New Energy Frontier initiative recognizes the value of environmentally sound, scientifically grounded development of both renewable and conventional energy resources on the Nation’s public lands. These lands contain some of the highest concentrations of wind, solar, geothermal, oil, gas, and coal energy resources in the United States. To encourage and facilitate renewable energy development, the President’s FY 2011 BLM budget proposes a \$3 million increase that builds on the \$16.1 million increase provided in FY 2010. The funds would be used to complete environmental studies for solar energy projects in Nevada and potential wind energy zones in Oregon and Nevada. In the conventional energy program, the BLM will focus on implementing oil and gas leasing reforms put forward by Secretary Salazar while placing continued emphasis on oil and gas inspections, environmental enforcement, and production monitoring activities.

The FY 2011 BLM budget request also includes a \$2 million increase to improve the BLM’s air-quality monitoring capabilities. The funds would help the agency implement an air-quality strategy, with the new money targeting areas with current or anticipated intensive oil and gas development.

The Budget maintains the BLM’s oil and gas management program capacity at current levels with a \$3 million decrease that reflects the completion of specific Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) studies. In addition, the Budget proposes new fees—estimated to generate \$10 million annually—to help offset the cost of the BLM’s oil and gas inspection and enforcement activities.



Climate Change Adaptation

The Secretary’s Climate Change Adaptation initiative recognizes the need to understand the condition of BLM-managed landscapes at a broad level; identify potential impacts from climate change; and develop and implement strategies to help native plant and animal communities adapt to climate change. These efforts are coordinated with other Interior bureaus and other partners through a network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. The President’s proposed FY 2011 BLM budget includes a \$2.5 million increase in support of the Climate Change Adaptation initiative, in addition to the \$15 million increase the Bureau received in 2010.



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Treasured Landscapes

The Treasured Landscapes initiative recognizes the need to take a landscape-scale approach to conservation. Through this initiative, the BLM is dedicated to preserving species and habitat, conserving and restoring rivers and riparian areas, and protecting lands of historical and cultural significance.

The FY 2011 BLM budget provides significant support to the Treasured Landscapes initiative with a proposed \$13.1 million increase for high-priority land acquisition projects, for a total of \$37.8 million for high-priority line-item projects. The total of \$37.8 million will add Federal protection to 25,679 acres of lands with key natural and cultural resources. The request also includes a program increase of \$1.3 million for management of new wilderness areas designated by the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, plus a \$414,000 program increase to fund high-priority operating needs for the monuments and NCAs.



Youth in Natural Resources

The Youth in Natural Resources initiative recognizes the value of encouraging young people to experience the myriad resources offered by the Nation's public lands and to engage and connect with the land around them. Since today's youth are less likely to be exposed to the outdoors in ways that children of previous generations were, the BLM is working to promote natural resource stewardship by fostering deep, personal connections between youth and the Nation's most treasured landscapes.

In FY 2010, the BLM received an increase of \$5 million to support programs and partnerships that engage youth in natural resource management; encourage young people and their families to visit, explore, and learn about the public lands; and promote stewardship, conservation, and public service. In FY 2011, the BLM will continue to fund these programs and partnerships. The Bureau will also dedicate additional funding toward the Youth in Natural Resources initiative through its association with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Specifically, the BLM will work with NFWF to direct that \$1 million of the requested \$3 million in passthrough funding to the Foundation be used to support projects that involve youth.



Other Funding: The National Wild Horse and Burro Program

Putting the BLM's wild horse and burro program on a sustainable track is one of Secretary Salazar's top priorities. The Secretary's effort would, among other things, apply fertility-control measures to slow the population growth rates of wild horses and burros.

Under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, the BLM protects, manages, and controls wild horses and burros that roam across 31.8 million acres of western rangeland, including 26.6 million acres of BLM-managed land. As a result of rapid herd growth, the BLM must remove thousands of wild horses and burros from the range each year to protect public rangelands from the environmental effects of herd overpopulation. Currently, the free-roaming population of 37,000 wild horses and burros exceeds by more than 10,000 the number that the BLM has determined can exist in balance with other public rangeland resources and uses. The ecosystems of public rangelands are simply not able to withstand the impacts (such as soil erosion, reduced water quality, and damage to wildlife habitat) resulting from overpopulated herds, which have virtually no natural predators and grow at an average rate of 20 percent a year.

Today the BLM finds itself in the position of needing to gather overpopulated herds from western rangelands while public demand for adoptable horses has declined, leaving more than 34,000 wild horses and burros in

holding facilities. In the current fiscal year, the cost to operate these facilities is approximately \$35 million out of the BLM's wild horse and burro program budget of \$63.9 million. Taking note of the BLM's spiraling holding costs and recognizing the agency's limited options concerning unadoptable horses, the Government Accountability Office issued a report in October 2008 that found the Bureau to be at "critical crossroads." In response to this untenable situation, Secretary Salazar announced on October 7, 2009, a new initiative aimed at putting the BLM's wild horse and burro program on a sustainable track.

To advance the Secretary's efforts toward program sustainability, the President's FY 2011 BLM budget proposal requests \$75.9 million for the wild horse and burro program, a \$12 million increase over the FY 2010 level of \$63.9 million. The budget proposal makes a separate, but related, land-acquisition funding request of \$42.5 million for the purchase of land for one wild horse preserve.

Budget Decreases

The 2011 budget funds Obama Administration priorities and reduces funding for lower priority programs, projects, and activities. Included is an

\$8.2 million reduction for resource management planning; a \$5 million reduction in the Oregon and California lands management program; a \$13 million reduction in the Alaska land conveyance program; elimination of the \$9.5 million Challenge Cost Share program; a reduction of \$600,000 from discontinuing two congressional "earmarks" in the Management of Lands and Resources account; a total of \$3.8 million in base funding reductions consisting of smaller reductions in several programs; management efficiencies totaling \$10.6 million; and a reduction in the construction program of \$5 million.

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